

10 May 2021

Wellington City Council  
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By email to: [policy.submissions@wcc.govt.nz](mailto:policy.submissions@wcc.govt.nz)

Tēnā koutou katoa

**Submission to:** Wellington City Council  
**Subject:** Aho-Tini 2030 – Arts, Culture and Creativity Strategy  
**From:** Creative New Zealand

1. Creative New Zealand welcomes the opportunity to make a submission on Council's new arts, culture and creativity strategy. Wellington's vibrant creative community is one of the city's greatest assets and a unique part of the capital's identity.
2. We'd be happy to discuss this submission with you further. The key contact person for matters relating to this submission is:

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#### Key Points

3. **We congratulate Council on its great work in developing Aho-Tini 2030.** We know substantial consultation was undertaken to engage as many voices as possible in shaping the city's vision for arts, culture and creativity. We commend, in particular, the leadership and advocacy role adopted by Council and its commitment to partnering with mana whenua. If implemented effectively, the Strategy presents a strong foundation for delivering real value to the city.
4. **It's excellent to see clear recognition of Council's responsibility to promote the cultural wellbeing of its residents throughout the draft Strategy.** Creative activity delivers a wide range of wellbeing benefits to individuals, whānau and communities across the four wellbeings, and we congratulate Council on its recognition of this through not only Aho-Tini, but also its Long-Term Plan and via the development of the Children and Young People Strategy.

## Overall Comments

5. The Vision and Principles of the Strategy have a clear emphasis on providing Wellingtonians with access to and participation in arts, culture and creativity. It's great to see emphasis on public participation, and we also encourage Council to recognise the importance of sector development and capability building to deliver this increased participation. We suggest Council ensures the Strategy's outcomes and action plan balance these two priorities – increasing opportunities for public access and participation, as well as developing the capability of the sector to produce ambitious, high quality work.
6. The Draft Strategy states that Aho-Tini will guide Council's investment in arts and culture, as well as the direction of relevant council-controlled organisations (CCOs). We'd encourage Council to consider how it might work with CCOs to deliver the strategy. For example:
  - how existing programmes might be adapted or improved to reflect the priorities of Aho-Tini
  - how reporting and performance measures can be utilised to provide accountability to the Strategy and show how CCOs are delivering to Aho-Tini
  - how Council could work with CCOs to enable them as delivery partners to take ownership for parts of the Strategy's implementation
  - how working with partners can ensure the Strategy is effective, implemented and there is good literacy/understanding of its priorities across Council and its delivery partners.
7. The draft Strategy notes an Arts and Creative Sector Group will be formed to champion the Strategy's vision and develop action plans. As Council forms this Group, we'd encourage it to consider how:
  - the voices in the Group represent a range of ethnicities, artforms, organisations and partners
  - the Group's size enables it to make decisions in a timely way
  - what the Group's mandate is (eg, is it governing, advising or delivering?)
  - those who provide expertise to the Group are fairly remunerated.
8. It's good to see an articulation of why arts and culture are of importance to Wellingtonians (p.14). As more cities and districts invest in developing arts and culture, it's important to consider the unique regional strengths of arts and culture in Wellington that cannot be found elsewhere. Council might consider using the *Wellington New Zealanders and the arts 2020* data to strengthen the case for the special role creativity has in Wellingtonians' lives as it promotes and implements the Strategy.
9. To build on the thinking Council has done around its roles within the sector (p.16-17), it could be useful to consider these roles within a wider sector ecosystem. For example, who else is funding, advocating or facilitating? Which of these roles is Council best placed to act in, and where might it need support? How might Council work with others holding similar roles to collaboratively achieve its vision?
10. One of the Strategy's principles is 'we ensure the foundations are in place for everyone to realise their aspirations'. With respect to these foundations, and based on what's recently been reported on through the media, we have concerns about how the proposed Experience

Wellington changes may impact Council's ability to give effect to Aho-Tini, through its council-controlled organisations or otherwise. From what we understand, the proposed changes may potentially erode the mahi of some of the city's most significant cultural assets. We do understand that, from time-to time, significant structural and/or strategic changes may need to occur within public institutions. However, as a general principle, where this is the case we think that it's imperative for decision-makers to meaningfully engage with the arts community and the wider community on the future of critical cultural infrastructure, and on any potential impacts that changes may have on the broader arts ecosystem.

#### *Our People/Aho Tangata*

11. It's great to see a commitment to reflecting Wellington's diverse communities in the city's arts and cultural offerings. To deliver to this focus area well, it will be important for Council to ensure these communities are represented in its decision-making, programme design and delivery processes. As mentioned in the action plan, increasing Council's cultural competency and internal capability will be crucial. Creative New Zealand is also undertaking similar work.
12. To deliver to Wellington's diverse communities, Council may wish to consider:
  - phasing which communities it focuses on over different points of Aho-Tini's implementation, to ensure delivery isn't spread too thin and remains effective
  - commissioning delivery or design to be carried out by communities the programmes are intended to engage
  - ensuring those communities are adequately resourced to engage with Council.
13. We note that in addition to Council's own cultural competency and internal capability, it may wish to consider how to enable existing arts and culture organisations to strengthen their own capacity to deliver to diverse communities. Therefore, sector capability building might be another area for action under this focus.

#### *Partnership with Māori/Aho Hononga*

14. It's excellent to see Council's focus on partnership with mana whenua as a clear focus in the strategy. We encourage Council to continue strengthening its relationship both with mana whenua and Māori communities over the next 10 years.
15. In line with Council's principles of partnership, participation and protection, it will be important to provide opportunity for the development and delivery of 'by Māori, for Māori' programmes through the Strategy's implementation to deliver to Māori communities.

#### *Our places and spaces/Aho Whenua*

16. We acknowledge the key role Council has as an enabler for arts communities to access places and spaces throughout the city. The current infrastructure developments and those proposed through the Long-Term Plan, such as the strengthening of the St James Theatre and Central Library, upgrades to the Council Office Buildings in Te Ngākau Civic Precinct, and the development of Tākina are all important progressions towards this focus area.
17. As Council develops the Strategy's action plan, we'd encourage it to consider:

- how it can support arts communities through its regulatory levers (eg, ensuring noise control policies aren't prohibitive for CBD venues as the city's urban density increases)
- how Council might work with other venues in the city (eg, school halls, tertiary education facilities, marae) to provide affordable access to existing venues in place of building new facilities.

#### *Pathways/Aho Mahi*

18. It's encouraging to see reference to Pōneke as a 'global hub of creativity and innovation' in the draft Strategy. In addition to providing important opportunities for public participation and access, we encourage Council to use Aho-Tini as an opportunity to drive a bold vision for the world-class professional artists, practitioners and organisations that are based in Wellington.
19. One of the primary challenges around the sustainability of Wellington's arts communities is affordable housing. There have been a number of international examples of innovative repurposing of urban spaces to create affordable space for creative practitioners to work and live. We would strongly encourage Council to focus on this area through the Strategy's implementation, as an issue of significance that Council is best placed to address.
20. An opportunity to explore as Council looks towards implementation could be collaboration with education providers. Wellington has a number of tertiary education providers with specialised creative programmes that are highly regarded nationally, and have a significant role to play in attracting and developing creative talent. Council may wish to consider how it could work with these providers to retain talent and deliver to the Strategy.
21. It's excellent to see Council's intention to align its programmes with Creative New Zealand's guidelines for fairer remuneration, and commend Council's leadership in this space.

#### **Creative New Zealand's interest in the arts in Wellington**

22. Creative New Zealand is the arts development agency of Aotearoa, responsible for delivering government support for the arts. We're an autonomous Crown entity, continued under the Arts Council of New Zealand Toi Aotearoa Act 2014. Our legislative purpose is to encourage, promote, and support the arts in New Zealand for the benefit of all New Zealanders.
23. We recognise the importance of Wellington to the arts in New Zealand. For arts that are delivered in Wellington specifically, we provided **\$9.74 million** of direct financial support in 2019/20. Our overall support includes the funding of individual arts projects as well as over 17 significant Wellington-based arts organisations and programmes. These include theatre companies, festivals, art galleries, dance companies, publishers and residencies.
24. Under the Creative Communities Scheme, we also fund territorial authorities directly to support local arts activities. In 2019/20, funding provided to Wellington City Council under the Scheme totalled **\$432,834**.

25. Thank you again for the opportunity to comment. Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions or if you wish to discuss this submission further (my contact details are at the start of the submission).

Ngā mihi rārau ki a koutou katoa, nā

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'D Pannett', with a long, sweeping flourish extending from the top right.

David Pannett  
**Senior Manager, Strategy & Engagement**  
**Pou Whakahaere Matua, Rautaki me te Tūhono**